

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 TRSE-00 AID-05 /072 W

-----290628Z 016552 /10

R 280922Z MAR 77

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7989

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 0645

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PFOR LA

SUBJECT: ARREST OF FORMER KING SAVANG VATTHANA

1. VARIOUS RUMORS ARE CIRCULATING ABOUT THE LPDR'S INTENTIONS IN REGARD TO THE FORMER KING. MOST OF THESE REPORTS HAVE THEIR SOURCES IN VARIOUS "SEMINARS". THEY CAN BE SUMMARIZED ROUGHLY AS FOLLOWS:

A) ACCORDING TO BRITISH AND INDONESIAN DIPLOMATIC SOURCES, LAO ATTENDING SPECIAL SEMINARS ORGANIZED FOR GOVERNMENT MINISTRY EMPLOYEES DURING THE THIRD WEEK OF MARCH WERE REPORTEDLY ASKED TO PASS JUDGEMENT ON THE FORMER KING, RASING THEIR HANDS IF THEY FELT THAT HE SHOULD BE EXECUTED FOR HIS "CRIMES" (AS LISTED BY GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES CONDUCTING THE SEMINAR). MOST EMPLOYEES REPORTEDLY DID NOT RAISE THEIR HANDS.

B) ALTHOUGH LAO CITIZENS IN LOCAL SEMINARS HAVE BEEN TOLD OF THE ARREST, THERE ARE NO REPORTS OF LAO CITIZENS BEING TOLD OF PLANS TO EXECUTE THE FORMER KING.

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MOST REPORTS FROM SEMINARS INDICATE THAT THE PEOPLE HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT THE FORMER KING IS ATTENDING RE-EDUCATION CLASSES IN EITHER VIANG SAY OR PHONG SALY NECESSITATED BY HIS BAD CONDUCT.

C) GOVERNMENT CHARGES AGAINST THE KING AS DISSEMINATED AT LOCAL SEMINARS APPEAR TO BE BUILDING IN GRAVITY AND NUMBER. THEY INCLUDE: 1) ENCOURAGING HIS FOLLOWERS

TO PLANT A BOMB AT NAM KHANG BRIDGE NEAR LUANG PRABANG,
2) HELPING TO PLAN A THREE-PRONGED ATTACK ON LUANG
PRABANG ON MARCH 5, 3) REFUSING TO ATTEND THE FIRST
ORDINARY SESSION OF THE SUPREME PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY OR A
RECENT SPECIAL ASSEMBLY SESSION, AND 4) TELLING HIS
FOLLOWERS TO ATTACK VIENTIANE. THE GOVERNMENT IS ALSO
REPORTEDLY CHARGING HIM WITH BEING RESPONSIBLE FOR THE
RETURN OF THE FRENCH IN 1946 AND THE COMING OF THE
AMERICANS IN 1954, AND OF BEING IN A LEAGUE WITH RESIS-
TANCE FORCES AND AMERICANS.

2. ON MARCH 25, I DISCUSSED THIS QUESTION WITH FRENCH
LAMBASSADOR DUZER, WHO AGREED WITH ME THAT SINCE THE
LPDR HAS NOT YET OFFICIALLY MADE THE CHARGES AGAINST
THE KING OR EVEN ADMITTED HE IS IN CUSTODY, IT IS
DIFFICULT FOR ANY FOREIGN GOVERNMENT TO BROACH THE
SUBJECT TO THE LPDR. DUZER SAID HE HAD MENTIONED THE
KING'S SITUATION TO THE CHINESE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES WHO
DISCRIBED IT AS "VERY COMPLICATED, USING A CHINESE
WORD WHICH INDICATED THAT HE HAD NO DESIRE TO DISCUSS
IT BUT ALSO SUGGESTED THAT THE LPDR WAS NOT HANDLING
IT VERY CLEVERLY. THE CHINESE CHARGE THOUGHT THE LPDR
ACTION WAS CLEARLY RELATED TO ITS CONCERN ABOUT DISSI-
DENT ACTIVITIES. DUZER ALSO THINKS SO AND CONSIDERS
THAT THE LPDR ACTION WAS MOTIVATED MORE BY NERVOUSNESS
THAN BY "DOCTRINE" REQUIRING THAT SINCE ONE OF THE
ALLEGATIONS CIRCULATING ON THE SEMINAR CIRCUIT IS THAT
THE KING WAS IN CORRESPONDENCE WITH "THE AMERICANS
ANY AMERICAN INTERVENTION WOULD BE EXTREMELY ILL
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ADVISED.

3. FOR THE SAME REASON I DO NOT THINK THAT I SHOULD
BE THE ONE TO APPROACH SWEDISH AMBASSADOR OBERG ON
THIS MATTER AS SUGGESTED BY TAIPEI. BRITISH AMBASSADOR
DOR CAPE TOLD ME MARCH 24 THAT A QUESTION HAD BEEN
ASKED IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ABOUT THE KING'S FATE
AND HE WAS TRYING TO FIGURE OUT WHAT TO SUGGEST ON
THAT SUBJECT. LIKE EVERYONE ELSE, HE IS HANDICAPPED
BY THE FACT THAT THE ONLY INFORMATION SO FAR AVAILABLE
IS THAT WHICH EMANTES INDIRECTLY FROM THE SEMINARS.

4. WE SHALL FOLLOW AND REPORT MORE INFORMATION AS IT
BECOME AVAILABLE.
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Message Attributes

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Sent Date: 28-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
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